

Message Text

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SUBJECT: WILL HEINEMANN RUN AGAIN?

1. SUMMARY: CONFLICTING RUMORS CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE ON WHETHER OR NOT HEINEMANN WILL AGREE TO ANOTHER PRESIDENTIAL TERM. ALTHOUGH THE SPD, AND REPORTEDLY ALSO THE FDP, HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PURSUADE HIM TO RUN AGAIN, THE POSSIBILITY THAT HEINEMANN WILL AGREE TO ANOTHER FULL TERM APPEARS REMOTE. SOME BELIEVE HEINEMANN HAS DEFINITELY DECLINED A SECOND TERM AND THAT PROBLEMS OF FINDING A SUCCESSOR ARE DELAYING A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS DECISION. OTHERS ARE SURE THAT A DEAL HAS BEEN MADE, WHEREBY HEINEMANN WILL AGREE TO CONTINUE AS PRESIDENT PAST THE 1976 ELECTIONS, TO BE SUCCEEDED IN MID-TERM BY SCHEEL. END SUMMARY.

2. DESPITE A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF HEINEMANN'S
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RELUCTANCE TO COMMIT HIMSELF, AGE 74, AND HIS WIFE,

AGE 77, TO THE COMMITMENTS OF ANOTHER FIVE-YEAR TERM, HIS FAILURE TO DO SO PRESENTS MAJOR PROBLEMS FOR BOTH THE SPD AND FDP.

3. A SUITABLE SPD CANDIDATE OTHER THAN HEINEMANN IS HARD TO FIND. NONE OF THE THREE MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED--DEFENSE MINISTER GEORG LEBER, NRW MINISTER PRESIDENT AND SPD VICE CHAIRMAN HEINZ KUEHN, AND LABOR MINISTER WALTER ARENDT--IS IDEAL. LEBER HAS BEEN MEETING INCREASED RESISTANCE FROM THE SPD'S LEFT WING, AND KUEHN HAS BEEN HAVING POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN NRW AND SOME HEALTH PROBLEMS. ARENDT IS CONSIDERED COLORLESS AND AT THE SAME TIME TOO VALUABLE AS A CABINET MEMBER AND TOO USEFUL BECAUSE OF HIS CONNECTIONS IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT TO BE "WASTED" ON THE PRESIDENCY.

4. IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT IT IS ONCE AGAIN THE FDP'S TURN TO OCCUPY THE PRESIDENCY, IF THE HEUSS (FDP) - LUEBKE (CDU) - HEINEMANN (SPD) SEQUENCE IS CONSIDERED A PATTERN TO BE FOLLOWED. THE MOST LIKELY FDP CANDIDATE ,HOWEVER, IS SCHEEL. ALTHOUGH HE IS SAID TO HAVE ONCE FOUND THE POSSIBILITY OF SERVING AS PRESIDENT SOMEWHAT ENTICING, HE IS AN AMBITIOUS POLITICIAN AND AT AGE 54, STILL HAS PROSPECTS FOR A BRIGHT POLITICAL FUTURE. MOREOVER, HIS AGREEMENT TO ACCEPT THE PRESIDENCY WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS SIGNALING THE DEMISE OF THE FDP-SPD GOVERNING COALITION. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE STRAINS IN THE COALITION AND A POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES IF THE LEFTWARD TREND OF THE SPD CONTINUES, IT STILL APPEARS THAT OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS THE FDP STANDS TO GAIN CONSIDERABLY MORE MILEAGE OUT OF COOPERATION WITH THE SPD THAN WITH THE CDU.

5. PERHAPS THE DILEMMA WILL BE RESOLVED THROUGH AN SPD-FDP ARRANGEMENT IN WHICH HEINEMANN WILL ACCEPT A SECOND TERM BEGINNING IN JULY 1974, BUT WILL RESIGN LATER TO BE SUCCEDED BY SCHEEL. THIS WOULD VIRTUALLY GUARANTEE THE CONTINUATION OF THE SPD/ FDP COALITION BEYOND THE 1976 ELECTIONS. IT WOULD ALSO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GIVE GENSCHER, COMING FROM THE FDP RIGHT WING, SUFFICIENT TIME TO CONSOLIDATE HIMSELF AS SCHEEL'S SUCCESSOR AS PARTY LEADER AND TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR A POSSIBLE COALITION WITH THE CDU IN THE LATE 1970'S. BUT HEINEMANN'S AGREEMENT REMAINS THE NECESSARY PRE-REQUISITE FOR SUCH AN ARRANVEMENO, AND THERE ARE RUMORS THAT HE HAS REJECTED IT. OTHERS CONTINUE TO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IN THE END HE WILL ACCEPT SUCH AN

ARRANGEMENT, HIS HEALTH PERMITTING.
HILLENBRAND

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